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Information

14 November 1947

FROM: Information Control, OEO
COUNTRY: Germany, Russian Zone
SUBJECT: Uranium Mining, Annaberg District, Saxony

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Labor

1. It is estimated that in the immediate vicinity of Annaberg 6000 persons are employed in uranium mining, and in the whole Erzgebirge mining area about 100,000 people are employed. Workers are provided largely by the labor offices throughout the Russian zone and are apparently distributed at the various mining sites through the labor office in Ann.

Ownership and Supervision

2. The mining is directed by a trust company which has purchased the mining rights from the State of Saxony. Supervision is exercised throughout by Russian military personnel. While actual mining is going on, there is one Russian military official attached to every 10 German workmen. The Russians work along with the Germans and inspection by high Russian officials are frequent.

Method of Exploitation

3. In Annaberg, one of the three mines currently being worked is on the Japlinstrasse. The main shaft is on the grounds of the B&A Factory. Work is carried out on a 24 hour basis. The second mine is the "Grannschacht" on the Ruckerswalderstrasse. The third mine, the "Dorotheenschacht", said to be the most productive in Annaberg, is located in the suburb of Cammerdorf. Workers are lowered at the main shaft to a depth of 40 meters and proceed through old mine tunnels to their current place of work which is 20 minutes from the entrance. The lower levels of the mine are still inundated.

4. In the town of Frohna, north of Annaberg, the "Bauerinstollen" has recently been re-opened.

5. In the whole Annaberg area the Russians are busily engaged, not only in opening old shafts, but in testing the slag piles of new and ancient mines. Where there is an indication the slag was dumped, trenches about 60cm deep are dug and the radio-activity measured. If the slag is radio-active it is dug up and spread out on a huge platform to a depth of 3cm. A Russian officer then tests the slag with an earphone device and the portions which register a high enough radio-activity are immediately packed into

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houses and the rest thrown away. Large sections of forest and cultivated land are torn up by this method of exploitation between Annaberg and Oeyser, but the most intensive testing is going on in the vicinity of Frohna.

Labor Conditions

6. The miners work in three shifts, from 0600 to 1400, from 1400 to 2000 and from 2200 to 0600. Persons who work above ground receive "heavy" workers ration cards and those who work below ground "heaviest" workers ration cards, and, in addition, 100 grams of cheese, 200 grams of milk and a few other food items per day. Each worker, as he comes off his shift, receives a hot dinner consisting of groats and meat. Occasionally, a shift or group of workers determined on some other basis receives a premium of a "talin" package per person. This package contains 4 lbs. of meat, 2 lbs of butter, 2 lbs of sugar, 2 lbs of cheese and six units of apple butter, all produced in Germany. During a period of several weeks 80 out of 6000 people in Annaberg received such packages. The miners purchase all their food in 5 Russian style basic stores, one for meat, vegetables, bread, butter and cheese, and potatoes. An occasional premium of schnapps and other material are distributed to an undetermined number of miners. The stores are controlled by the mine administration and the costs of the purchases are deducted from the workers wages. The miners receive 0.90 to 1.40 M per hour depending upon the production of each shift. A worker has no means of verifying the correctness of his pay.

7. It is a matter of luck that there have been no serious accidents because safety installations in the mines are virtually non-existent. The number of fatalities is difficult to determine because the workers are from many different areas. Protective clothing is issued only to miners working under water. Almost all the workers have a helmet of some kind; Army, air-raid garden and Fire Department helmets are most frequently seen. Recently hot showers have been installed for all workers.

Mining Area Security

8. The entire Erzgebirge mining area is closed to non-authorized travel, and a special stamp is required to enter it. This stamp is issued in Chemnitz three mornings a week, but the issuing office is closed after ten to twenty permits have been issued. Three or four documents showing the necessity for entry are required before the permit is granted. The roads and railroads leading into the prohibited zone have check points and are rigidly checked. One such point on the railroad between Chemnitz and Annaberg is just south of Scharfenstein.

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Local Ideas on Russian Intentions

9. The inhabitants of Annaburg express the usual doubt about the seriousness of the Soviet efforts. Some consider them a large-scale bluff and point to the greatly overdone security measures in support of their contentions. At best, it is considered that the Russians have a double purpose, one of obtaining uranium and the other of maintaining control over the physically qualified population of the Soviet zone. The bulk of the labor used at the mines consists of men who have been examined by physicians and are in their most productive years from a physical standpoint.

Miscellaneous

10. All Soviet installations and sections of the town where Soviets live and work are surrounded by wooden fences 1 1/2 to 3 1/2 meters high. The Barkhardt housing development in Annaburg are occupied by the local AVB group.

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